

request reconsideration of this rejection.

The Examiner asserts that the '286 patent discloses a main body constituted by a pipe, a steering bracket, a bracket, a U-shaped stay, and a reinforcing member. The Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner's rejection, thus the Applicants traverse the outstanding rejections.

The Tanaka patent discloses an instrument panel structure of a front body of an automotive vehicle for supporting a steering apparatus. The front body includes a floor panel member and front side members extending upward from and on opposite sides of the floor panel member. The instrument panel structure includes a support member that extends substantially parallel to the floor member in a transverse direction of the front body and is secured at its opposite ends to the front side members. The support member supports the steering apparatus at a position to one side of the center of the support member. The instrument panel structure also includes reinforcing means for restricting deformation of the support member caused by forward swinging movement of the steering apparatus during a collision. The reinforcing means includes a reinforcing pipe member closely fitted into one side of the center of the support member.

The present claimed invention defines an instrument panel supporting member structure. The instrument panel supporting member structure includes a main body, including a pipe which is arranged in a lateral direction with ends connected to right and left front pillars, at least one steering bracket positioned on a driver's seat side for supporting a steering column, a bracket connected to a dash panel, and a stay positioned substantially on a central portion and connected to a floor part. The pipe constituting the main body is integrally formed with joining parts by crush-molding with the joining parts joined to the front pillars.

The '286 patent fails to teach or suggest a pipe which constitutes a main body being integrally formed with joining parts by crush-molding and with the joining parts joined to the front pillars as defined in claim 5 of the present invention. The present claimed invention defines a pipe with crush molded portions at both ends of the pipe constituting a main body so that the pipe is integrally formed with joining parts that are directly joined to corresponding front pillars. By doing so, stress is dispersed as a result of both ends of the pipe being crush-molded, thereby obtaining high rigidity for a joining area and increasing the supporting rigidity for a steering column of a supporting member. Furthermore, by utilizing an instrument panel support member as claimed in the present invention, the need for side brackets to secure a support member to front side pillars as taught in the '286 patent is eliminated. The desire to eliminate the use of brackets as taught in the '286 patent is further supported by the data in the specification of the present application in which the steering supporting rigidity is increased by the use of a pipe formed with integral crush-molded joining parts as claimed in the present invention rather than the use of brackets taught in the '286 patent.

For the foregoing reasons, the Applicants believe that this subject matter of claims 5-10 are not anticipated by the '286 patent. Reconsideration of the rejection to claims 5-10 is respectfully requested.

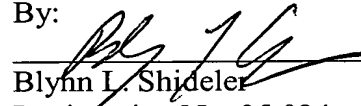
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, the Applicant's believe that claims 5-10 are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the Examiner's rejections and allowance of claims 5-10 are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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